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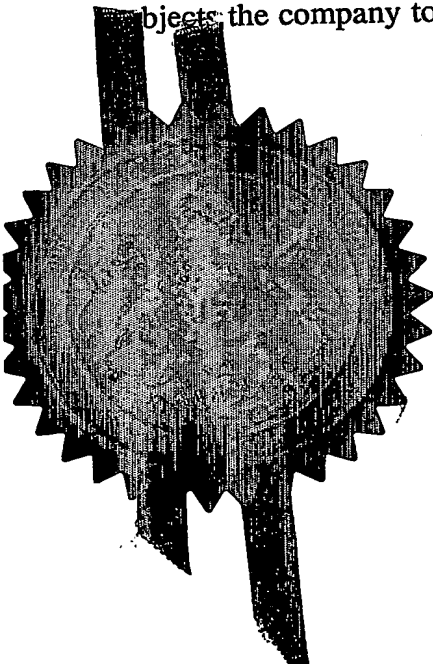
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PATENTS ACT 1977

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09 JUL 2002

REQUEST FOR GRANT OF A PATENT

~~09 JUL 2002~~THE GRANT OF A PATENT IS REQUESTED BY THE UNDERSIGNED ON THE
BASIS OF THE PRESENT APPLICATION

0215785.7

I Agent's reference: LOCK

II Title of Invention: Motor Vehicle Accessory

III Applicant:

Name: LOCK, Richard Steven

Country: UK

Address: 26 St Leonard's Avenue, Chinham, Basingstoke, Hants,
RG24 8RD

8420564001

IV Inventor

(a) The applicant is the sole inventor

V Name of Agent:

M G Harman

VI Address for Service:

M G Harman & Co, Holmwood, 37 Upper Park Road,
Camberley, Surrey, GU15 2EG

tel: 01276 22985

7429210001

VII Declaration of Priority:

nil

VIII The Application claims an earlier date under Section 8(3), 12(6), 15(4), or 37(4):

nil

IX Check List

A The application contains the following numbers of sheets:

1 Request 1 sheet

2 Description 3 sheets

3 Claims nil

4 Drawings 1 sheet

5 Abstract nil

B The application as filed is accompanied by:

nil

X It is suggested that Figure No of the drawings should accompany the abstract when published

XI Signature:



Applicant

Motor Vehicle Accessory

5 The present invention relates to motor vehicle accessories, and more specifically to hub caps.

 A car wheel is normally fixed to a disc on the end of a shaft by means of bolts; typically there are 5 bolts. In some designs, the bolts are left visible; in
10 such designs, the portions of the wheel around the bolts are often shaped into a heavily moulded appearance. In many designs, however, the bolts are covered by a hub cap which clips onto the wheel. The hub cap is roughly disc shaped, and is usually formed with a distinctive pattern. The hub caps will of course rotate with the wheel.

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 The object of the present invention is to provide a hub cap with a novel appearance.

 According to the invention there is provided a hub cap comprising a fixing
20 attachable to the wheel and a cap unit rotatably mounted on the fixing. The cap unit is preferably weighted so that it maintains its orientation relative to the ground despite rotation of the wheel.

 With conventional hub caps, the pattern normally has high rotational
25 symmetry. The patterns is effectively not visible when the car is moving at significant speed; when the car is stopped, the pattern may have any orientation. Since the present hub cap, in contrast, maintains its orientation relative to the ground, any pattern on it will always have the same orientation. The pattern can therefore be for example pictorial, and/or can incorporate wording. One potential
30 application of the present hub cap is for advertising purposes.

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The discussion above has been primarily in terms of cars, since hub caps are used on cars to a much larger extent than on for example commercial vehicles. However, the present hub cap can be used equally well on commercial vehicles and other motor vehicles.

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A hub cap embodying the invention will now be described by way of example and with reference to the drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is an exploded perspective view of the hub cap; and

Fig. 2 is a side view of the hub cap.

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The hub-cap comprises a hub cap unit 10 and a fixing unit 20. The hub cap unit 10 comprises a hub cap element 11 which is slightly dished, as shown in Fig. 2, with a stub axle 12 mounted at its centre and with a weight 13 attached to it as shown. The fixing unit 20 comprises a mount 21 with a housing 24 attached to it, a pair of bearings 25 mounted inside the housing 24, and a retaining clip 26.

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The mount 21 has 5 prongs 22, each with a hole 23 at its end. These prongs are cranked so as to hold the housing 24 above the level of the ends of the prongs. The mount is dimensioned to fit on the bolts of a standard wheel disc. To fix the fixing unit 20, the wheel nuts of the wheel are removed, the mount 21 is placed against the wheel and on the wheel bolts, and the wheel nuts refitted. The hub cap unit 10 can then be fitted to the fixing unit by pressing the stub axle 12 into the bearings 25 in the housing 24. The clip 26 engages with the stub axle and retains the hub cap unit in engagement with the fixing unit.

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The hub cap unit can rotate freely on the stub axle in the bearing housing. The weight 13 will move to the lowest point, so maintaining the orientation of the hub cap unit as shown. Any pattern printed or attached to the hub cap element 11 will therefore retain the same orientation regardless of the angular position of the wheel.

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The mount 21 has to match the design of the wheel to which it is to be fixed. A range of mounts for different vehicle manufacturers may therefore be provided. The mount may have one or more prongs omitted; 3 prongs are clearly sufficient for adequate mounting. Slits may be used instead of the holes 23, to
5 allow for bolts at different radii from the wheel axle for different manufacturers. Obviously other means, eg clip means engaging with radial elements of the wheel or wheel mounting, may be used instead.

The engagement of the hub cap unit 10 and the fixing unit 20 may be made
10 releasable under a strong pull on the hub cap unit, to allow access to the wheel for tyre pressure checking and wheel changing. Alternatively, the hub cap element may be made with apertures allowing access to the inner parts of the wheel and with a cover plate which clips removably over it.

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Claims

30 Any feature of novelty or combination thereof within the meaning of Article 4H of the International Convention (Paris Convention).

FIG. 1

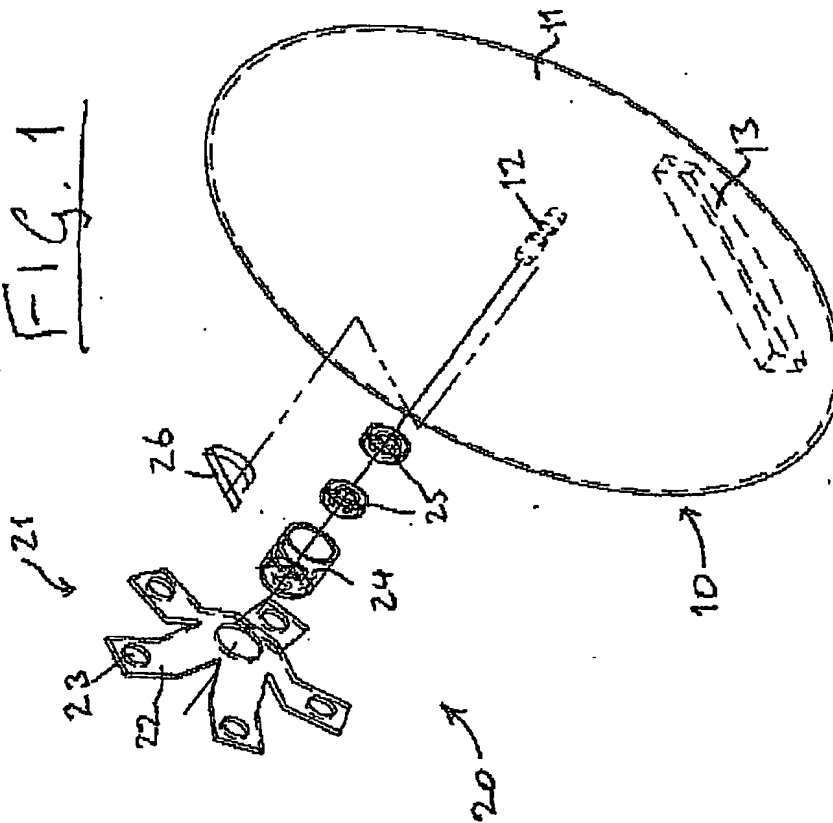
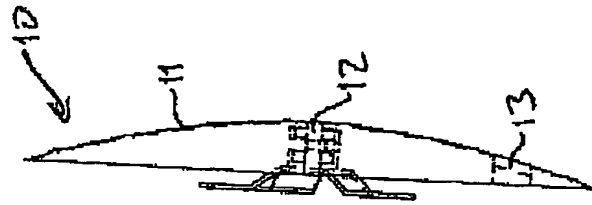
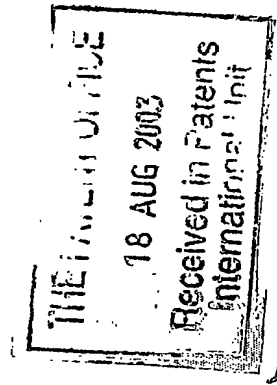


FIG. 2



PCI/AR 2003/002966



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